1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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and forth on the sandy bank to the rhythm of the voicees in the drums, but their gods would not come. They could not dance, they could not find peace while the drums spoke, and so this disconsolate pacing went on week after week, on those days when the river gods might be danced to. Sometimes the pulse of the drumming, quickening for an interval, stirred the dancers. A shudder would go through the body of one or another and the dry throats would fall to uttering the sacred cries, but almost the next instant the hand of the drummer would go limp, and once more the listless, agonized pacing would continue. The gods were angered. When the drums called them from the river bottom, they came grudgingly and remained sullen, refusing to make their wishes known, and no gods or ancestors came to counsel the wise men in their sleep how to bend the will of the spirits of the river.

In the fields the parched earth baked in the merciless heat until it was like whitened bone. The few plants that had pushed their way up through the sandy soil were now brown dust which any wind might scatter. But there was no wind. No rain, no wind, for in the river the god of the wind dwells, and in the sky the rain god; and these gods are twins, and twins have but one soul, since it is with the gods as it is with humans.

No rain, no wind. Famine was upon the land.

At last, at the village of Opoku a woman had a dream. She was a pure albino, one of the type who, together with those who show by the slight turn of red in their wooly hair a strain of albinism, are called Toné people, and are identified with the river gods. To this Toné woman the gods came in sleep, and spoke their will.

"And what was it you gave to the gods?" we asked Sedefo, who had fallen silent at this point in his story.

"Mati," he said, after a pause, "I am not an important man. You ask what I may not tell. My mouth cannot take upon itself to speak what concerns our big men."

This much he would say. A boat filled with things had been sent down the river. Men standing at the river bank

REBEL DESTINY

782 241 535 Among the people of one group, the principal ceremony may be held in the clearing itself. The drums are brought, and men and women and children pray for fertility. The beautifully carved apinti drum sounds the invocation to the Great God and to the ancestors, while the tall agida drums are brought to call the earth spirits. Two by two the men dance susa, the dance which in pantomime reproduces an ancient warrior's combat with spear and shield, the winner taking on a new combatant, until the final winner is given a wand as a reward, and gains for himself the title of "G'aman of Susa" until the next dance is held. Other dances follow. Perhaps the women now line up in two long [585] rows facing each other, and dance bandamba, the dance [845] which celebrates marriage and the birth of twins, and the birth of a child who is born feet foremost. The motions are the slow rhythmic manipulations of the muscles of hips and [842] abdomen. It is a dance of fertility, danced by the very young girls as well as by those who have borne children. But the women who are past the age for dancing sit with [888] their men, arms interlaced, swaying to the rhythms of the songs they sing. . . . There are offerings to the earth spirits, poured upon the earth out of black obia pots and [469] calabashes, while other offerings are set upon the ground for the ancestors.

In another settlement, the ritual would be chiefly carried on in the village itself, and there might be a local dance of [842] fertility, danced nowhere else on the river. "An old, old ancestress taught it to us," the villagers would say.

462 241 When it is time to plant, the woman plants with the man's help.

"When I plant a new field," said the younger woman, "I 782 pray as I work."

539 And this is her prayer:

O Sky God, Mother of the Earth, Ancestors,
I am planting a field,
Make it bear;
People who come to me must eat,

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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get the tchina which, if we do not break them, will let us stay healthy. Both our parents care for us."

He thought for a moment, and then, with a laugh, he wondered as Awingu had wondered that early morning at the planting ground.

"Is it not so in your country, Bak'a," he said, "that you ask me so often about these things?"

8

"Massa cow," we heard Bayo call out again and again to his great-grandfather Bibifo, when he wanted to indicate to the old man that he knew what he was about. Bibifo accepted the reproof with unvarying meekness and good humor.

This relationship between them puzzled us. Yet the other men, overhearing Bayo's brusque words to Bibifo, made nothing of it. Before strangers, Bayo was subdued, shy. He stuttered ceremonially when he addressed a man of rank. He pitched his voice only a little above a whisper when he was in a strange village. Toward Kasanya and Sedefo and Asikanu he was respectful, and showed reserve. When he wanted his hair trimmed he came to Angita for help, or, better still, to the young man at the prow of Kasanya's boat who, like Kasanya, was of his own clan.

The old man was not a forceful fellow. That was, perhaps, the reason, we thought at first. Then we wondered if it was not because Bibifo had become Adrian, and no longer wore obias to carry him well on the water—because he had forsaken the old gods. But the other men treated Bibifo with the respect due an old man. When Kasanya killed a monkey, and his own pole-man could not share it with him because he was a twin and twins did not eat monkey, he turned to Bibifo with the pole-man's portion, and not to Sedefo, or to Asikanu, who was the brother of a clan head, and himself a possible successor to his brother's chieftainship.

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"*A naki apinti, ai!*—He is playing the apinti," his father said, laughing, and a woman who stood by said that when he grew up he would have an important god. It would be a good god, too, and it might be a great Komfo—a priest reincarnated in him.

Among the little girls who were with us most often, and now stood by with Yankuso's grandson, were the two daughters of Dida, the wife of Chief And'u of S'ei, who went about the Granman's village with white on her face and body. The little girls were also washed in the white clay, and there was white in the wool of their hair. They had the quick, startled movements of their mother, and one of them in particular was a nervous child, shy and easily frightened. She never came too close to the strangers, and, for a time, if they but caught her eye, she would begin to tremble with fear.

"Your daughters are handsome, Dida."

"Ai, they come from a good line," she said, laughing.

The Granman's younger wife said, "They will have many gods when they are big. They will have them from their mother, and theirs will be stronger yet. They are twins."

It was possible, she explained, by looking at a child to know if it would have the gods of the family. Sometimes the gods took a dislike to a child and refused to give it of their wisdom or protection, and sometimes the gods liked it so well that they gave it many gifts—the gift of a fine singing voice, the ability to dance better than others, and the good fortune to be liked.

"Until they are grown, the gods do not trouble them much," she added, "but we in the bush know a child who will have important gods, and we know if the gods will be kindly."

"Do you mean you know because of kunu?"

"*Ma kye*, all gods do not come from kunu."

4

One day when sitting among the women, the talk was of twins.

845 "The next time you come to the Saramacca country, you must have twins here," the women said, laughing, "then you will see what a play we give for them. And for a child born after twins, and for a child who is born feet foremost."

The last, however, was not good, and they were really not in earnest, they explained, in wishing that type of childbirth upon the stranger.

"Such a child has a bad spirit. The mother almost always dies when giving birth."

"Is there no obia to save her?"

"The gods can save the mother if they wish. . . . "

There were special songs for twins which were sung when bandamba was danced. Several of the women, and Dida among them, began to sing them. The songs praised the generative powers of the man and woman who had "made" twins. As the women began their songs, they rose from their work and danced, for just as they could not 533 remember the words of a song apart from its melody, so 535 they could not sing the melody without the accompany- 845 ing dance movements which went with it. Words and melody and movements of the body were all part of the image evoked by the word "bandamba." With arms firmly planted on their hips, and feet slightly apart for balancing, the slow rhythmic play of abdomen, hips, and buttocks went on and on.

But as they sang and danced, the Granman's younger wife suddenly remembered that their voices must carry to the council house, and abruptly the women stopped, covering their faces.

"We're ashamed," Dida explained.

"But the men see you dance bandamba when you give your plays for twins, and the child after twins, and for marriages?"

"Yes, but then it's singing and dancing at a play."

When an occasion called for these songs and dances, it was quite another matter, she implied.

"It is not good to do this for sport."

WOMEN AT WORK

"Before she begs the gods, she is seated on a mat, or on cloths. Over her head a white cloth is thrown. The woman who is there to look after the coming of the child takes a calabash with water. Then she throws the water on the ground where the woman is seated. She begs the great gods, and the ancestors, and the woman's soul, and the woman's gods.

"When the pains come, she ties a cloth about her belly tight, tight, until it hurts. The woman who helps her gives her some water if she wants it, and she presses down on the belly and makes the cloth tighter and tighter, until the child comes. The cord is cut with a knife."

The knife was the same as the kind they used for cicatrizing, and the after-birth was buried behind the house, in a small hole into which food and a piece of the sacred sangrafu wood was thrown.

"The child is washed, and then *pemba*—kaolin—is put on its forehead, and after that the mother and the child bathe every day and then wash in pemba. Sometimes a moon comes and wanes, and another comes, and the mother still puts the white on herself and on her child."

But if the birth proved to be difficult, then the husband was told, and he besought his own ancestors and his own gods to help his woman and child.

"If the child doesn't come, then it's a bad spirit. Then they call the obia man."

When a woman had difficulty, everybody was troubled about it. If a woman had been unfaithful to her husband and had not confessed it, it would be that which would be killing the child in her womb, and killing her as well. Sometimes it was *wisi*—black magic—and everybody wondered who had sent it to their village. Sometimes it was a god who was envious.

"If it is a god, then, when the woman is strong again, she goes to a more powerful god and buys from him the next child to come into her womb. The strong god sees to it that the jealous one finds no way to harm the child."

What happened when a child was born dead?

Herskovits & Herskovits B-8 (1933-1959) 1934
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845 966 The women had spoken with greater and greater reluctance about troubled births and now moved uneasily.

"You must not ask this," said Dida, rising. "Never talk about such things to young women."

Not until later, when Fenekonde and Tenemi were left alone with the white woman did they talk about birth customs again.

When a child died at birth, a hole was dug somewhere in the family quarter, or just outside it, and the child was buried there. There was no wake, no mourning. All those who had been living in the house where it died found other quarters, and for a month the house was washed with obia water. But if this had occurred before to the same mother, they would break the house where the child was born and would cast the pieces into the unhallowed bush. Some people on the river even broke it down at the first occurrence. There were never any wakes for very small children.

961 845 966 "Children die because they are bad spirits come in the form of a child. When they do not stay, we know it is a bad spirit. When the house is broken, they do not know their way to come again."

"What if a woman died?"

845 966 This was whispered so softly that only Fenekonde heard it, but she did not conceal her distaste for the question.

"When a woman dies she is put in a flat coffin. Some villages give her no coffin at all. Weeds are put into her eyes. All the girls in the village wash their eyes with obia weeds and water. They must never see this again. There is no wake. There is no dancing. No guns are shot. They break the house, and throw it after the coffin, as the men carry it away. She must not come back again."

But the white woman must not imagine that all deliveries were difficult. Often a woman bore a child, and, when the after-birth came, she herself rose and bathed and washed in pemba.

551 A child was given many names. Even in early childhood four or five names were not too many. There was the day

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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name which was kept secret and never spoken except in states of possession or when the obia man called on a person's spirit. For girls, Amba for a Saturday child, Affi for one born on Friday, Adjuba for Wednesday; and for the boys some of the names were Kwaku, for Monday, Yao for Thursday, Kofi for Friday, and Kwasi for Sunday. Then there was the name which the father gave, and after that any of the family who cared added a name and made the child a present.

From the day it was born until it was at least two years old a child fed at its mother's breast. For twelve moons and five more of this time the woman could not go to the hammock with a man. It was then that her husband went to the distant French shore to work or to the railhead. But after seventeen months of nursing were past, he came back.

"If a child is made before a woman gets back her menstrual flow, then it is a god. It is Kesefu. A child born feet first some call Agosu, and some Asaeng. The child born after twins we call Dosu, and twins are Hohobi. Now it is in your book. You will give those names to your children, and your sister's children. No one will know at all what names these are. No one will be able to harm them."

6

In the quarter immediately adjoining that of the Granman there was great activity. Six or seven men and boys were at work on a new house, for the youngest daughter of the family was ready for marrying, and now the men were helping her suitor to build a house for her in her village.

From the same quarter, behind a house which stood in the shade, came the laughter of young girls. We made our way past the house and saw four girls ranging in age from thirteen to sixteen seated on a log. One of these held her head back, and an older girl was bending over her. They called to us as we passed.

"We are cutting kamemba. Do you want some cuts, too?"

These were not new cuts which were being made, for with perhaps one exception, the girls were all nubile, and

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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4

532 The cult of fertility came to the Suriname bush from
831 Africa. Deepseated today in this civilization, it is not strange that it should be invoked again and again in the carvings, that men and women in sexual congress, and animals in the act of reproduction should dominate the art motifs, and in particular those carvings which men make for their women.

539 The symbolism is known to all on the river though, as we have indicated, a gifted artist might play with his medium, and even give his own name to what he had designed. Evidences of nontraditional playing with technique were, to be sure, not met with often, but one or two instances stand out. One that was especially striking was a hinged folding stool, fashioned after a bench seen in the [350 191] city, and decorated in traditional fashion, where the problem of decorating unfamiliar surfaces was met.

Bayo could take up many of our photographs of pieces,
532 acquired during our first visit and brought here into the
123 bush to show the natives how their pieces were exhibited,
197 and describe the symbols to us which made up the carvings. There was one which interested him especially. He used to sit with the photograph in his hand, running his fingers over the glossy surface, as though he felt if he continued doing it long he would actually feel the texture of the wood which was so clearly imaged.

532 "Everything shows. Here's a crack, see?" Then his hands touched one motif after another. "This and this are women, and these are men. A man and woman to one side, and a man and woman facing them. It's like having the tray here, white man." The small designs close to the rim of the tray, facing each other, were the children to be
● [845] born of these unions. "This is a boy, and this a girl. That is for both women to make twins."

We were looking over his shoulder as he explained the symbols, but still could not distinguish in the symbols to the side which represented the male child and which the female.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

224 other words, preparing a dog in such a manner that it will
231 be capable of hunting a particular species of game. There are
825 several methods of accomplishing this. The Negro may grasp the animal between his knees and pour the *dressy* through the nose of the dog. This substance is composed of pieces of the animal which they desire the dog to hunt. Most commonly it is the foot; this is dried and then infused with water. The infusion is also rubbed on the dog's feet. Such preliminaries are usual in hunting peccary.

If the hunter desires to prepare his dog for pursuing the *labba,* a type of water rodent, he cuts the flesh from the nose of the labba and also from its feet, prepares an infusion with water, and then pours this through the dog's nose. Still another method is to mix the hair of the animal which is to be hunted with pepper, and then to rub the dog all over with this mixture.

A fourth way is to feed a piece of the liver of the desired animal to the dog; but it is essential that the liver be placed on a knife, allowing the dog to eat it from that.

224 There is an interesting superstition among the Djukas that
845 anyone who is related to a twin will seriously disrupt a hunting party. On one occasion a large quata, or spider monkey, was sighted by some hunters who, however, failed to bring the animal to earth after fifteen shots. Their ill-luck
to the fact that one of the huntsmen "belonged to a tw

/121 cont./

843 [827] Sexual relations continue during the whole pregnancy, for they are reputed to be indispensable for the formation of the mind of the child, which is thought to come from the father; also, for a man whose wife is pregnant there can be no question of abandoning her nor even of leaving for a long trip without the permission of the head of her lineage.

843 787 Forecasting of the birth. Divinatory rituals are carried out from the first months of pregnancy to forecast whether the childbirth will be easy or not. For that one goes to an old man who "knows" one of these remedies. There are several: one consists in making a small hole in the center of a cross outlined on the ground, pouring into it a decoction of magic herbs kept secret, and putting an egg into it. The remedy-master then says: "If the childbirth is to be easy, the egg must be crushed as soon as my foot bears down /122/ on it." They state that sometimes the egg resists crushing: from this they deduce that the delivery will be difficult.

844 [789] When the time for delivery arrives, concern is centered on the danger of maleficent human entities, ɔgi sani, which try to become incarnate in the child. The woman is shut up in the house, all of its exits are blocked off, and ɔbiaman are called to perform rites of protection all around the house. If [845] delivery is difficult, that is attributed to the fact that one of these entities succeeded in getting into the house in spite of the precautions taken.

The ɔbiaman are called to "wash" the woman with the help of appropriate remedies.. Only in serious cases are men allowed to enter the house. As a general rule, during the first 846 602 eight days only women related to the mother may enter. (Care is even taken as far as possible to get as midwife (mena) an old woman related to the mother.)

/122 cont./

845 [621] Observation at Maripasoula, November 3, 1956. The wife of Baïna, boatman of the border-fixing mission, gave birth at Pikin Tabiki, small farming village where she works with her mother and the latter's husband. Baïna went to be present at the delivery.

It was very long and dramatic. According to Baïna, an ɔgi sani had entered the child's body, making him stiff and impossible to extract. As a last resort they called a neighbor, T..., known for having a good gita. He called his gadu who revealed an efficacious remedy, since after the body of the sick woman was bathed with the prescribed leaves, the delivery ended successfully.

846 [515] Since we were leaving on our trip, it remained to find someone to take his place in fulfilling one of the husband's duties: cutting the supply of wood for heating the water necessary for the hot douches /showers?/ the mother was going to be given several times a day for about three months. He made an agreement for that with Kwata, his mother-in-law's husband, to whom he will pay about 1,000 francs. [465]

851 613 [603] Presentation of the child. On the eighth day the maternal grandmother (or great-grandmother if she is still living) takes the child and gives it to another ancestress of the same lineage, stationed in front of the house. The latter presents it to the family. Then [769] the head of the lineage, without taking the child, goes to the [778] fraga tiki to make an offering of tafia, asking the ancestors to [782] protect it.

For example, for the birth of A... (Lapé Tabiki village), son of O Yundu (L2, G60), it was Asakundu, grandmother of Yundu and great-grandmother of the child, who came to take him in the house and gave him over to her sister Térésa (L2, E57) to present him to the family (see genealogical table of the Lapé lineage, fraction 2).

/194 cont./

773 One day, the devil came in the form of the serpent dagowe. He told them: "Eat the seeds of this tree and you will know all things like God himself."

Adam allowed himself to be tempted and ate a custard apple, he had Efa eat some of it. He found this fruit good and said: "God had deceived us." His heart changed, he ceased looking at Efa as a sister and united with her. She became pregnant.

Some time afterward, God came upon the earth and saw what had happened. He said to Efa: "Thou shalt bear a child in pain." And to Adam: "Thou shalt eat only what thou hast harvested by the sweat of thy brow." He gave him a stone axe and told him: "Go on the nearby mountain; thou wilt find the seedlings of what thou wilt have to plant henceforth in order to feed thyself."

Efa had two twins whom she again called Adam and Efa, and other children. From these children all men have descended.

[777] This Biblical myth, transposed into the African way of thinking, explains the beliefs of the Refugee Blacks concerning [845] twins. It was two twins whom God created first. Twins are beloved of God and share his nature.

776 The idea most generally accepted among the Boni is that Masa Gadu is the source of force from which all living beings derive theirs; men are connected with him through their ancestors.

It happens that Masa Gadu may intervene directly in the lives of men, and in such a case he acts necessarily according to justice, without any magic whatever being able to protect the guilty one. But in most cases he does not intervene, showing himself in that way to be as arbitrary as the lower gods.

/255 cont./

784 262 A... of the Dju lo, about 28 years old in 1958, must observe six kina:

--The cayman and the jaguar as bwasi kina.

--The otter (yundu) as akka kina. /256/

These three kina have been imposed on him since his first years, but the meaning of them was explained to him only later on.

[751] --The eel (mānsi) was imposed on him as a kina by his father when the latter gave him a man nɛ̃ŋge ɔbia, ɔbia of protection against machete or gun, materialized by an iron bracelet.

[841] [834] To this ɔbia is attached another kina. A... must not speak to a woman having her menstrual period.

[751] [787] --Finally, the crab (kaabu), kina attached to an ɔbia of which the man concerned only spoke with reticence, probably a Kumɛ̃nti bui (bracelet of Kumɛ̃nti, instrument of divination).

A... has no gadu kina in the strict sense of the term.

There exists no food kina common to all the Boni; the cayman is generally forbidden to them as bwasi kina, associated with another animal; but this is not absolute; we know at least one Boni who has not received this kina.

If someone has broken a kina inadvertently, he can have himself cleansed of this offense by ɔbiaman. But if he broke it willfully, he cannot escape the punishment attached to the offense.

845 828 Beliefs about twins. They have the idea that twins and children who follow twins are of a nature different from other men, participating in a divine principle.

[755] Twins cannot live (since they do not belong to ordinary humanity) if they are not treated with a special remedy known only to certain lineages especially rich in twins.

/256 cont./

845 961 678 613 When twins die young people almost always blame a disagreement which has arisen in the lineage. The twins did not want to live in a disunited family. The head of the lineage then exhorts his people to be reconciled with one another at any cost in order to avoid new misfortunes.(1).

[753] [182]

1. In general they have the idea that dissensions occurring in the lineage have as a consequence illnesses or misfortunes striking the members of the lineage. This notion plays a major role in the social life of the Refugee Blacks; after the kunu, it is the principle cement holding groups together.

845 798 One who harms a twin is sure to fall ill. Conversely, it is assumed that the twin must not abuse his power, that he must lead an upright life and avoid quarrels. He is nearer to God than other men.

They assume for example that Efa, of Papaïston village, herself a twin and the mother of twins, has a very special power. Nobody would risk harming her.

[613] [774] In lineages having many twins there exists a place of worship sacred to a vital principle called Twilenge. The nature of this principle is not clear. The Boni define it as the soul of twins. Is it a matter of the first twins Adam and Eve? Or of a collective worship offered up to all deceased twins?

845 /257/
782 This worship is celebrated each time there is occasion
751 to protect newborn babies. They are washed with a certain decoction of leaves.

845 Every four or five years on the average a big dance takes
535 place, then the father and mother of twins and the twins
751 themselves are washed in order to maintain their powers and keep them in good health.

[784] If these dances are not held, dead twins will show their
[753] anger by making living twins and parents of twins sick.

845 Lineages that do not have twins do not practice these
613 rites. If twins are born to them, they will apply at the place
778 of worship of another lineage.

Papaïston and Lapé have this cult particularly highly developed.

842 Tɔne pikin. It is assumed that a woman may be made pregnant
776 by a river god, either a Papa gadu snake god or by the Wata lɔgi, which look like Indians. Children thus conceived are called tɔne pikin.

A..., of Papaïston, had cut a clearing opposite a remarkable white rock called Weti stɔ, where she used to moor her boat. She had not had any children for several years
[787] and she became pregnant. When her daughter was born a
[778] possessed person revealed that she was born of a Papa gadu
[782] snake god which lived there: since then her parents /relatives/ go regularly to this rock to make offerings.

About 1910 Alama (Kormotibo) had followed her husband to a shipyard on the lower river; one day while walking in the forest she met an Indian having the appearance of a Galibi Indian, who was carrying a newborn baby. She stopped and admired the baby. The Indian said to her: "Do you wish to raise him?" She acquiesced. He said: "We shall see each other again"; then he went away so quickly that she had the impression that he had disappeared on the spot.

/257 cont./

842 A few weeks afterward she found herself pregnant, and it seemed obvious to all that this was the doing of a Wata Ingi.

845 No magic power is attributed to the tone pikin, any more than special mental or physical characteristics. But it is assumed that they are the object of a special protection, and that they cannot be harmed with impunity.

771 The sacred character of payment. Relations between the gods
789 and men always have the character of a bargain, among the
435 Refugee Blacks: an irritated divinity is never appeased by repentance or good will; it requires that it be paid; likewise, an obia is of value only for the person who has paid for it. Refugee Blacks will never utilize ready-made magic recipes: uttering certain words, making certain gestures; face to face with such a recipe they will ask immediately: "From what
[E/2] god does this obia come, and whom must one pay?" It seems that in their conception every transference of a spiritual power or a magic force disturbs something in the proper functioning of the universe; payment restores this equilibrium, it is the
[M] mark of legitimacy. Some Creoles of African ancestry transpose the same idea with respect to Christianity, and this is
/258/ why they insist so much on paying for masses and buying
759 "orisons" (ǂ). One observes likewise that free medical care
558

1. Written prayer to which is attached protective power. This notion, borrowed from the rustic magic of 17th-century France, seems to have been introduced into Guiana by the first European colonists.

lowers the prestige of the doctor in the eyes of all.